

Town of Northfield Planning Board Site Plan Review/Special Permit

Pine Meadow Road Solar Array C



BEACON
INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS

May 20, 2021

Overview

❖ Parcel Information:

- Map 54, Lot A8-15 – Book 5819, Page 29*

❖ Applicant Information:

- Property Owner: Jacob A. and Robin C. L'Etoile*
- Project Owner: BWC Pine Meadow Brook LLC, wholly-owned special purpose entity of BlueWave Project Development, LLC.*
- Site Control Entity (Lessee): BWC Otter Run, LLC, wholly-owned special purpose entity of BWC Holdings, LLC and BlueWave Project Development, LLC.*
 - ◆ *Option Agreement has not been filed with the Franklin County Registry of Deeds*
- Long-term Solar Owner/Operator: To be determined. Project will be sold post COD.*
- Construction Contractor: To be determined.*

❖ Project Summary:

- Project Information:*
 - ◆ *~0.567 megawatts DC, ~0.5 megawatts AC*
 - ◆ *0.5 megawatt energy storage, DC coupled*
 - ◆ *Fixed, pile-driven pole mounts*
 - ◆ *Estimated 1,350 solar modules, central inverter, energy storage (lithium-ion battery)*
 - ◆ *Leased area is approximately 13.1 acres*



Property Restrictions

❖ FEMA Flood Zones:

- ❑ *Parcel contains existing streams associated with the Connecticut River along the easterly and westerly portions of the parcel. Portions of the parcel falls within FEMA Flood Zones A1, A16, A17, B and C, and is sited just outside of the 200-foot Riverfront Area.*

❖ Natural and Historic Considerations:

- ❑ *Applicant has entered into an agreement with the Atowi Project as of April 8, 2021, to serve as a consultant to advise on matters relating to cultural resource considerations. The engagement is effective from survey and site investigation through project construction.*
- ❑ *Applicant has collaborated with the Northfield Historical Commission and has agreed to engage an archaeologist to prepare all documents, required studies and sampling in connection with the filling with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (“MHC”).*
- ❑ *Applicant will submit a project notification form (“PNF”) to the MHC and will be conducting Phase 1A and 1B archaeological studies. Applicant will collaborate with the Northfield Historical Commission (“NHC”) and seek approval from the Planning Board if the studies require changes to the project approved under the Special Permit. The archaeologist will also serve as an advisor on an as needed basis.*
- ❑ *Applicant has confirmed it will comply with the Northfield Archaeology Accountability Policy.*

Siting Considerations

❖ Setback Requirements and Encroachment:

- The majority of the security fencing on the western portion of the parcel is sited within the 100-foot setback restriction from the property boundary.*
- A portion of the 18-foot gravel access road and security fencing on the southern portion of the parcel is sited within the 100-foot setback restriction from the property boundary.*

❖ Landscape and Visibility Impacts:

- No vegetative screening has been proposed.*
- While the concrete equipment pad is sufficiently setback from the property boundary, it will likely be visible to abutters from the southern and western portions of the parcel, and potentially from Pine Meadow Road. Adding vegetative screening should be considered.*

❖ Stormwater Management Considerations:

- Applicant designed the 18- foot gravel access road to minimize grading impacts.*
- No stormwater management controls have been proposed.*

Utility Interconnection

❖ Location and Conceptual Design:

□ *Applicant has proposed the following interconnection design:*

- ◆ A concrete equipment pad sized 40-feet by 40-feet will be sited at the southernmost portion of the Project, generally in the center of Parcel Map 54, Lot A8.
- ◆ An 18-foot gravel access road, running northeast to southwest, will connect to the property owner's driveway.
- ◆ Underground conduit will be run from the concrete equipment pad, under the gravel access road, to the property owner's driveway to support medium voltage wiring requirements.
- ◆ Three new utility poles, with aboveground wiring will be sited on the property owner's driveway and one new utility pole will be sited on Pine Meadow Road.

Surety and Property Tax:

❖ Decommissioning Assurance Obligations:

- *Applicant has offered to provide a decommissioning assurance amount which Beacon believes undervalues the effort to decommission the system. Decommissioning assurance is a surety instrument for the Town to draw upon if at any time during the life of the project the Town requires the project to be removed and the property restored, and the project owner defaults on that requirement.*

❖ Property Tax:

- *Payment in Lieu of Taxes (“PILOT”) for Solar Assets: M.G.L. Ch. 8, Section 61 enables the Town and the project owner to enter into a PILOT for the solar personal property assets. A long-term PILOT agreement will exempt the solar assets from personal property taxation. The Town’s Assessor should engage with the Applicant to determine whether a PILOT is appropriate.*

Beacon Recommendations

Special Permit Conditions

- ❖ Applicant must provide timely notice to the Town of any assignment, transfer or sale of BWC Pine Meadow Brook LLC.
- ❖ Applicant must work with the Atowi Project during design and construction and engage an archaeologist to support the filing requirements with MHC and provide guidance to NHC.
- ❖ Applicant must seek Planning Board approval for any material changes to the Project, including but not limited to capacity, location, area, equipment height, equipment changes impacting noise or contaminants and ground disturbance, and must provide to the Planning Board final construction design documents stamped by a MA licensed professional engineer prior to applying for the Building Permit.
- ❖ Applicant must seek Planning Board approval for any material changes to the utility interconnection design and construction plan as approved in the Special Permit, including location, material disturbance of vegetation, pole placement, overhead wiring and underground conduits.



Beacon Recommendations

Special Permit Conditions

- ❖ Applicant must notify and provide all required identification information to the Planning Board of the selected Engineering, Procurement and Construction (“EPC”) it selects to construct the Project.
- ❖ Applicant must provide year-round access to the equipment pads and demonstrate annually compliance with its Post Construction Stormwater Operation and Maintenance Plan as provided in its revised submission dated April 13, 2021.
- ❖ Applicant must document that decommissioning obligations of the Applicant are addressed between the Property Owner and the Applicant.
- ❖ Applicant must provide decommissioning surety in an amount and form acceptable to the Town.



Beacon Recommendations

Special Permit Conditions

- ❖ Prior to Commercial Operation, Applicant must provide safety and emergency training for Town staff, public safety and first responder personnel.
- ❖ In connection with receiving Certificate of Occupancy from the Building Inspector, Applicant must provide:
 - As-Built documentation stamped by a MA licensed engineer*
 - Safety manuals and emergency protocols*
 - Documentation from the Northfield Fire Department approving fire suppression systems and emergency protocols*
 - Decommissioning assurance to the Town in amounts and form agreeable to the Town*

Site Plan Review/Special Permit

General Compliance Overview

- ❖ Beacon notes that the submission of the original application, follow-on information, documentation and willingness to work with the Atowi Project and the Northfield Historical Commission meets the intent of the Zoning Bylaw and requirements of the Site Plan Review except for the following:
 - Identification of the long-term owner/operator*
 - Identification of the construction contractor*
 - Encroachment on the 100-foot property boundary setback restriction*
 - Provision of safety manuals and emergency protocols*

- ❖ Beacon has offered various Conditions for consideration, which in our professional opinion clarifies the intent, design and long-term operations of the Project. Further, several of the proposed Conditions provide improved documentation and protections for the Town over the life of the Project.

Thank You!

Beacon Integrated Solutions

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